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ABSTRACT

This booklet offers learning activities for children with disabilities grouped into art activities, activities that encourage interaction, and activities that encourage movement. The activities emphasize touch, smell, sight, and hearing to allow children to utilize their strongest senses. Each activity is presented with possible goals, materials, and a detailed step-by-step description of the experience. Art activities include blow dryer painting, smelly tissue paper art, mixer painting, stained glass art, sock painting, "footprint turkey," rolling pin painting, inkblot painting, and marble painting. Activities which encourage interaction include mitt painting, hosiery wars, and bumper swings. Activities which encourage movement include parachute fun, flashlight madness, sensory tunnel, bolster diving, human bowling, roller mural, and wheelchair/scooter races. (DB)

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ART & Games

Sensational Activities for Children with Disabilities

by
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Peg McNerney, M.Ed.

Rhode Island Services to Children with Dual Sensory Impairments
University Affiliated Program at Rhode Island College

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ART
&
GAMES

Sensational Activities for Children with Disabilities

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INTRODUCTION

The more we learn about children with physical, developmental, or sensory challenges, the more apparent it becomes that these children do not experience the world in the same way as children without disabilities. Creating activities which are meaningful and enjoyable for all children can be quite challenging. This booklet was developed to offer teachers and parents a variety of sensory-based activities which integrate learning and fun.

This booklet is divided into three sections: Art Activities, Activities which Encourage Interaction, and Activities which Encourage Movement.

> ***Art Activities*** includes a variety of unusual art projects which were designed to encourage communication, and fine and gross motor skills. Opportunities to practice meaningful skills using sensory pleasing and stimulating materials is the focus of each activity.
>
> ***Activities which Encourage Interaction*** offers alternative activities and materials which create the opportunity for peer and adult interaction. These unusual experience can involve children with and without disabilities in a fun, active experience.
>
> ***Activities which Encourage Movement*** explores some creative ways to facilitate movement through games and independent play. Included in this section are activities which highlight both visual, auditory, and tactile senses.

Each activity is presented with possible goals, materials, and a detailed step-by-step description of the experience. It is important to remember that all activities included in this booklet are not exclusively for children with special needs. Many of the activities can easily be enjoyed by children of all ages in inclusive educational settings or at home. Since each activity highlights touch, smell, sight, and hearing, children can understand and enjoy the experience using their strongest senses.

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ART ACTIVITIES

BLOWDRYER PAINTING

GOALS:

1. The student will activate a switch which controls a mixer to splatter the paint.

2. The student will use choice making skills to select the desired color of paint.

3. The student will use communication skills to indicate if he/she wants "more" of the activity or to be "finished."

MATERIALS:

- blowdryer
- paper
- paint.... watered down. It must be very runny.
- environmental control unit

PROCEDURES:

1. Set up the environmental control unit so that a student can activate the blowdryer through a single switch.

2. Give the student a choice of colors.

3. Place watery paint on the paper.

4. Have student activate the blowdryer to "spread" the paint over the paper.

5. Painted paper can be cut into any holiday shape or kept as a painted sheet.

developed by Susan Dell and Peg McNerney

SMELLY TISSUE PAPER ART

GOALS:

1. Student will use communication skills to choose colors of paper and to indicate they want to continue the activity.
2. Student will use fine motor skills to tear tissue paper into smaller pieces.
3. Student will use gross motor skills to roll the vinegar on the tissue paper.

MATERIALS:

- white construction paper
- tissue paper in assorted colors
- sponge or paintbrush to spread the vinegar
- vinegar

PROCEDURES:

1. Have the student wet the paper with vinegar using either a paintbrush or a sponge.

2. Give the student the choice of colors of tissue paper.

3. Allow child to tear the paper into pieces. Student might need assistance in this if he/she is prone to eat project materials. Pieces can be of any shape or size..... the more unusual the better.

4. Student can use communication skills to request each piece of tissue paper, or to indicate he/she is finished. Place the tissue paper on the construction paper.

5. Again, use the sponge or paintbrush to spread the vinegar over the tissue paper. The smell will be quite strong.

PROCEDURES ... continued

6. Allow the paper to dry. Once dried, the tissue paper can be peeled off, leaving the dye imprint.

The project can now be removed and either cut to a holiday shape or put in a construction paper "frame".

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MIXER PAINTING

GOALS:

1. The student will activate a switch which controls a mixer to splatter the paint.

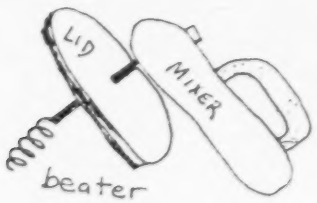
2. The student will use choice making skills to select the desired color of paint.

3. The student will use communication skills to indicate if he/she wants "more" of the activity or to be "finished."

MATERIALS:

- kitchen mixer, one beater will be used
- a plastic container at least 6" deep with lid
- paper
- paint....
- environmental control unit and a switch (if available)

the materials should be set up as shown below:



PROCEDURES:

1. Set up the environmental control unit so that a student can activate the mixer with a single switch.

2.. Fit the stem of the beater through the lid as shown above. Place paper around the inside edge of the container.

3. Give the student a choice of colors.

MIXER PAINTING ...continued

4. Place the paint on the beater and fit the lid on the container

5. Have student activate the mixer to "splatter" the paint over the paper. Students may be encouraged to feel the vibrating container.

6. The painted paper can be cut into any holiday shape or kept as a painted sheet.

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STAINED GLASS ART

GOALS:

1. Student will use communication skills to choose colors of paper.
2. Student will use fine motor skills to tear tissue paper into smaller pieces.
3. Student will use fine motor skills to place the paper on the sticky surface.

MATERIALS:

- clear or frosted contact paper
- tissue paper in assorted colors
- construction paper
- a stapler

PROCEDURES:

1. Prior to activity, cut contact paper into squares of desired size (18"x18" is a suggestion).

2. Give the student the choice of colors of tissue paper.

3. Allow child to tear the paper into pieces. Student might need assistance in this if he/she is prone to mouth project materials. Pieces can be of any shape or size..... the more unusual the better.

4. Remove the tissue paper and place the contact paper **sticky side up** on the student's tray or table area. Tape can be used to anchor the contact paper to the work surface.

5. Give the student the tissue paper and show how it can stick to the contact paper. Student can use communication skills to request each piece of tissue paper, or to indicate he/she is finished. The tissue paper can overlap and does not need to be completely flat. Texture adds to the look.

PROCEDURES... continued:

6. Once the student is done placing the tissue paper, top it off with a second piece of contact paper (sticky side down) .

The project can now be removed and either cut to a holiday shape or put in a construction paper "frame". This project looks great when hung near a window to allow light to accent the "stained glass" look.

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SOCK PAINTING

GOALS:

The students will use communication to indicate the following: choice of colors, continuation of the activity, completion of the activity.

MATERIALS:

- 2 socks with velcro sewn near the toe
- sponges with opposite velcro sewn on (hint: it is easiest to machine sew velcro on the sponge when the sponge is wet)
- paint
- paper
- smocks

PROCEDURES:

1. Place paper on the painting surface on which the students will be working.

2. Attach "velcro" sponges to the socks.

3. Put the socks on the students' hands or feet. (Hint: plastic bags can be placed under the socks to avoid paint on students' skin.)

4. By lifting socks up and down, the students can create designs on the paper.

5. Students can mix sponge designs easily by placing a new velcro sponge on the sock.

6. Activity can be ended by washing the student's hands in a soapy pail of water.

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FOOTPRINT TURKEY

GOAL:

Students will use communication skills to indicate they want: a turn, "more", "finished", choice of colors, etc.

MATERIALS:

- one foot, without sock or shoe
- paper
- paint
- paintbrush
- dish of water
- tiger's paw vibrator (optional)

PROCEDURES:

1. To begin the activity, have the student assist in removing socks and shoes.

2. Have the student choose colors to be used.

3. Gently brush a wet paintbrush on the bottom of a student's feet.

4. Wait for the student to indicate "more", then paint the foot.

5. Rotate the foot three times on the paper. This creates the fan of the feathers. Rubbing the tiger's paw vibrator under the paper helps spread the paint and is also enjoyable to some students.

6. The head/neck of the turkey can be made by painting the big toe and placing in the appropriate place.

7. The activity can be ended by having the students place their feet in a warm, soapy bin of water.

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ROLLING PIN PAINTING

GOAL:

The students will use communication to indicate the following: choice of colors, continuation of the activity, completion of the activity.

MATERIALS:

- **TUPPERWARE** rolling pin or other substitute such as a modified coffee can with cover
- paper
- wax paper or Saran Wrap
- paint
- something noisy to place inside the rolling pin such as marbles, ice cubes, rocks, etc.

PROCEDURES:

1. Have the students help place the noise-making objects inside the rolling pin.

2. Have a student choose a color of paint. (choice can be made through a communication board, or by providing two choices and student eye-gazes or touches the desired color. The goal does not need to be whether he/she knows the color but rather that their is an opportunity for choice making.

3. Randomly blob the color/colors of paint on the paper.

4. Place either wax paper or Saran Wrap over the paint.

5. Move the rolling pin over the paper and have the student feel the way the paint "squishes" under the pressure.

6. Remove the paper and see the interesting design (hint: the removed paper can be used for a second print).

This paper can be dried, and cut into any shape to suit the event or holiday (i.e. valentine heart, Christmas tree, flag, picture frame).

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INKBLOT PAINTING

GOALS:

1. Students will choose the colors used in the painting.
2. Students will indicate the desire for more paint "squishing".

MATERIALS:

- paper
- paint

PROCEDURES:

1. Pre-fold paper in half and place opened sheet on a flat surface (table or student's tray).

2. Have a student choose a color of paint. (choice can be made through a communication board, or by providing two choices and student eye-gazes or touches the desired color.) The goal does not need to be whether he/she knows the color but rather that there is an opportunity for choice making.

3. Randomly blob the color/colors of paint on the paper.

4. Assist the student in folding the paper in half so that paint is touching paint.

5. The student can pound the folded paper, wheel over the paper, drive a switch operated car over the paper..... any movement so that the paint gets squished flat.

6. Open the paper and see the interesting design of inkblot.

This paper can be dried, and cut into any shape to suit the event or holiday (i.e. valentine heart, Christmas tree, flag, picture frame)

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MARBLE PAINTING

GOAL:

Students will use communication skills to choose colors of paint and/or to indicate they want to continue the activity.

MATERIALS:

- a cardboard box with a cover
- marbles, any size or kind
- paint
- paper

PROCEDURE:

1. Put a paper in the cardboard box.

2. Have a student choose a color of paint. (choice can be made through a communication board, or by providing two choices and student eye-gazes or touches the desired color. The goal does not need to be whether he/she knows the color but rather that there is an opportunity for choice making.

3. Place the color/colors of paint on the paper.

4. Have student assist in dumping the marbles into the box.

5. Put the top on the box.

6. Show student (hand over hand if necessary) how to shake the box.

7. Student can indicate he/she wants a turn to shake the box. Student can use a "more" symbol or merely make a noise to call attention to themselves.

8. Remove the paper to show the child the final product.

This paper can be dried, and cut into any shape to suit the event or holiday (i.e. valentine heart, Christmas tree, flag, picture frame).

developed by Peg McNerney and Susan Dell

ACTIVITIES WHICH ENCOURAGE INTERACTION

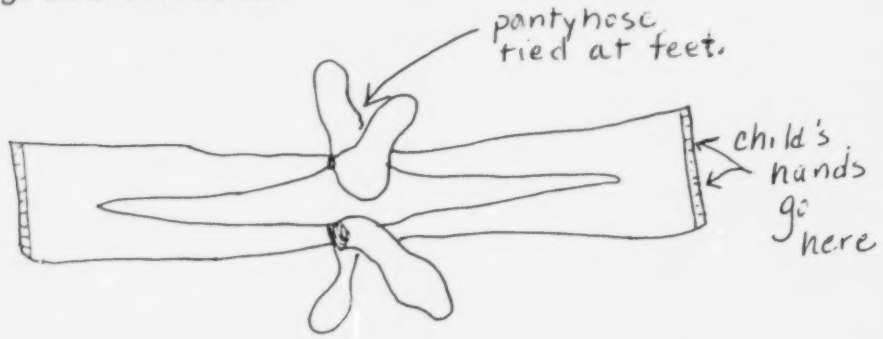
HOSIERY WARS

GOAL:

Students will maintain interaction by pulling each other while attached with stocking gloves.

MATERIALS:

• 2 pairs of old pantyhose, tied together around the legs as shown below:



PROCEDURES:

1. Pair students together: pairs of active students with more passive students will engage more continued interaction.

2. Place students in any position which is comfortable and allows free movement of arms (e.g. lying on a mat, sitting in a wheelchair).

3. Slide a leg of panty hose on each child's arms, so that both children are now attached.

4. Once the hosiery are in place, allow the students to experiment with movements. The goal is to have them experience interactions with a "friend".

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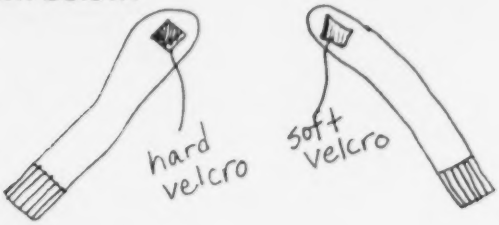
MITT PAINTING

GOAL:

The students will maintain interaction with one other student throughout the painting activity. Pairing one active student with a more passive student leads to more interactions.

MATERIALS:

- 2 mitts made out of old socks, connected with velcro as shown below:



- paint
- paper
- smocks

PROCEDURES:

1. Place paper on the painting surface on which the students will be working.

2. Put smocks on the students.

3. Put the mittens on the students.

4. Show students how they are connected and how the movements of one person "moves" the other.

5. Place paint on the paper and allow the students to paint together. Some tugging will probably occur. It is good to give the students the opportunity to work with one another.

6. Students can tap the mitts to the paper, slide the mitts across the paper, etc. The goal is more to have them react to one another rather than receive a final product.

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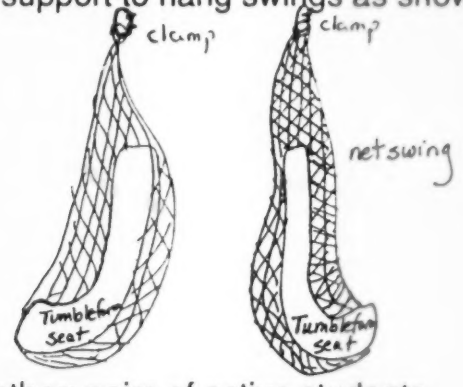
BUMPER SWINGS

GOAL:

Students will maintain interaction by bumping each other while seated in net swings.

MATERIALS:

- two net swings
- two tumbleform seats
- large sized mat for under the swings
- adequate support to hang swings as shown below:



PROCEDURES:

1. Pair students together: <u>pairs of active students with more passive students will engage more continued interaction.</u>

2. Place students in side-by-side tumbleform swings, set up as shown above. Make sure to allow enough room around the swings to ensure safe play.

3. Using adequate supervision, allow the students to bump into each other by pushing them gently side-to-side. Students in the swings can continue interacting with each other by pulling on each other's swing or having a peer assist from a nearby wheelchair.

4. To facilitate communication during this activity, the students can be stopped from swinging, and asked if they want "more". If they indicate they want to be "finished", teacher should immediately remove student from the swing.

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ACTIVITIES WHICH ENCOURAGE MOVEMENT

PARACHUTE FUN

GOALS:

1. Students will call attention to themselves for a turn under the parachute.

2. Students will maintain a grip on the parachute.

3. Students will indicate they want "more" or want to be "finished" with the activity.

MATERIALS:

- one parachute (brightly colored)
- a colorful sheet may be substituted for a parachute

PROCEDURES:

1. Place students in a circle in a room with considerable space.

2. Arrange the opened parachute so that each child is touching an edge of the material. Some students will be able to maintain a grip on the chute, others will need it tied or attached to their arm or wheelchair.

3. Lift the chute up and have the students experience the sensation of the air rushing out and the material dropping to the ground.

4. Ask the students if they would like a turn. The student that calls gets to sit under the chute and feel the chute fall upon them. Communication goals can be integrated in whatever way is appropriate to the student.

5. Students with mobility goals can be required to walk, wheel or crawl under the chute as part of their turn.

6. Students can end the activity by pushing the material into a pile to indicate the activity is finished.

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FLASHLIGHT MADNESS

GOALS:

1. Students will use personal mobility to move their flashlight beam.

2. Students will activate the flashlight through a single switch.

3. Students will communicate like/dislike for bright lights directed toward them.

4. Students will call attention to themselves while left "alone" in a darkened room.

MATERIALS:

- flashlights for each student
(a light can be turned on via a battery interrupter or environmental control unit if the student has limited fine motor control).

- a room which can be darkened

PROCEDURES:

1. Select a room which can be darkened.

2. Place the students in this room without creating much noise. Wait for each student to "call attention" to themselves either by vocalizing or creating a noise. Reinforce the student immediately for the attempt. (tactile reinforcement, or verbal reinforcement can be used)

3. As each child calls attention, provide the student with a flashlight. Some students will be able to hold the device, others will need the light taped to a wheelchair tray or attached to a mobile arm or leg.

FLASHLIGHT MADNESS ...continued

4. Allow the students to experiment with the flashlights. Some students will need to activate the lights through a switch.

5. Students can be asked whether they want "more" or are "finished". Those with "more" responses can keep their lights on while the "finished" responses can have their lights disconnected or removed.

6. Students with mobility goals can be encouraged to make their lights move by wheeling, walking or moving on the floor.

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SENSORY TUNNEL

GOALS:

1. Student will use communication skills to indicate they want a turn to enter the tunnel.

2. Students will use mobility skills to move through the tunnel.

MATERIALS:

- one refrigerator box
- a string of Christmas lights
- four chairs
- air fresheners, perfume, or potpourri
- bubble wrap

PROCEDURES:

1. Assemble the tunnel as shown below*:

* use extreme caution in the placement of the electrical lights to avoid electric shock.

2. Select a method for each child to move through the tunnel (i.e. scooter, wheelchair, crawling).

3. Place the student at the opening of the tunnel, prompting them to feel the side of the box. Assist the student through the tunnel to experience the sensations.

4. Place the student at the opening of the tunnel . Give the student an opportunity to indicate that he/she wants a turn using the established or emerging communication system. If "more" is desired, assist the student in progress through the tunnel.

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BOLSTER DIVING

GOALS:

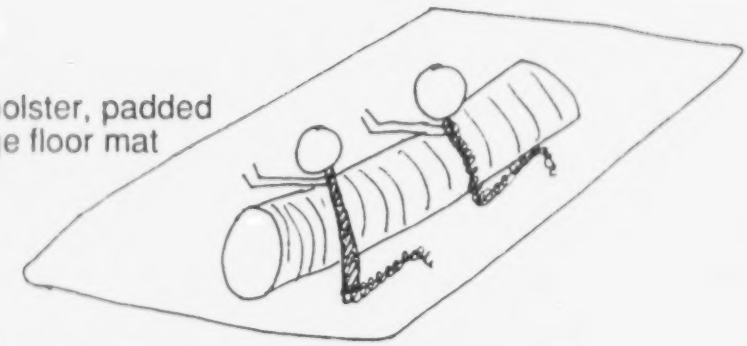
1. Students will use protective responses when lowered over a bolster onto a mat.

2. Students will indicate they desire "more" of an activity using their established or emerging communication systems.

3. Students will interact with students using the bolster at the same time.

MATERIALS:

- one bolster, padded
- a large floor mat



PROCEDURES:

1. Pair students together: pairs of active students with more passive students will engage more continued interaction.

2. Place students prone over the bolster/roll with adequate teacher "spotters" both in front of and behind students.

3. Encourage the students to kick/push forward, causing the students to move forward toward the padded mat. With outstretched arms, students will feel the upcoming mat as their balance falls forward (using protective responses).

4. Once the students are in place, allow the students to experiment with movements. One goal is to have them experience interactions with a "friend".

5. Stop all activity at various times and ask the students if they desire "more" or want to be "finished".

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HUMAN BOWLING

GOALS:

1. Student will use communication skills to indicate they want a turn.

2. Students will use mobility skills to move toward the bowling pins.

MATERIALS:

- plastic, lightweight bowling pins
- students
- bowling recording sheets (optional)

PROCEDURES:

1. Create a bowling alley using an open area of any size.

2. Set up the pins at one end.

3. At the "release line", give the student the opportunity to indicate he/she wants a turn. Once indicated, have the student use mobility skills to move toward the pins and knock them over. Ideas for movement could include: wheeling a wheelchair, moving in a scooterboard, rolling on a mat, rolling down an inclined wedge toward the pins. If student has no current means for independent mobility, assistance can be given by "helpers" using extreme caution as to speed, distance and aim.

4. The response of the spectators and "helpers" can act as reinforcement for communication and mobility attempts.

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ROLLER MURAL

GOALS:

1. The student will activate a switch which controls a music device to begin the painting.

2. The student will use choice making skills to select the desired color of paint.

3. The student will use communication skills to indicate if he/she wants "more" of the activity or to be "finished."

MATERIALS:

- paint roller (extension handle optional)
- mural paper
- paint
- environmental control unit with a switch
- music/sound device (i.e. radio, record player, tape recorder, buzzer)

PROCEDURES:

1. Set up the environmental control unit so that a student can activate the sound device through a single switch. Assign one student as the "paint master". When this student activates the music, the "painter" student moves back and forth, rolling and painting the mural with color.

2. Place mural paper on a wall accessible to a child in a wheelchair.

3. Give the student a choice of colors using whatever choice mode available to the student (direct selection, eye-gaze, communication board, oral communication).

4. Place paint on the roller.

ROLLER MURAL ...continued

5. Wait for the "paint master " student to activate the sound device. Once activated, have the "painter" student move along the mural to paint the wall. For students without independent mobility, assistance can be given. Some students might enjoy a "bumpy" ride with many jerks... this also produces interesting designs on the mural paper.

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WHEELCHAIR/SCOOTER RACES

GOALS:

1. Each student will use personal mobility (arm or foot movements) to move his/her scooter or wheelchair.

2. Students will activate the "starting gun" through a single switch.

3. Each student will use his/her established or emerging communication system to indicate if he/she wants "more" or to be "finished" with the activity.

MATERIALS:

- call buzzer..... used by the student as a "starting gun"
- a room with defined start and finished lines. This can be achieved using masking tape, carpet tape (to add a "sticky" sensation)
- a noise maker at the finish line to guide children with visual impairments in the correct direction
- mobility devices such as:
  - kneel scooter
  - prone scooter
  - tumbleform seat on casters
  - sling scooter
  - wheelchair

PROCEDURES:

1. Select a mobility device for each child which facilitates the maximum participation in movement.

2. Choose one student to start the race by activating the call buzzer ("starting gun").

3. Place the students at the starting line, calling attention to the tactile cue which has been placed on the floor (i.e. tape).

4. Teacher can prepare students by loudly calling "On Your Mark, Get Set" and then giving a touch cue to the student responsible for activating the "starting gun".

PROCEDURES ... continued

5. Teachers at the finish line can begin cheering and ringing the noisemakers to prompt students in the correct direction.

6. Reinforce students immediately for wheelchair/scooter movements using verbal praise, tactile reinforcement (i.e. vigorous rubbing, tapping, hand shaking, high-five, sandwich-five).

7. Repeat the activity, asking the students "Who wants more?" and offering additional cues (i.e. moving the scooter back and forth). Wait for each student to "call attention" to themselves by vocalizing or creating a noise. Reinforce the student immediately for the attempt by quickly moving them to the starting line and assisting him/her to feel the tape.

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